

Supplementary Statement

Name: Eleanor McGruffog

Case Ref: APP993484

DOB: April 12th, 1971

Name of Care Homes: Calder Grove Children Home and South House Close Support Home Edinburgh.

Reason for going into care: Abuse at home

Age in care: 1986-1989, 15 – 17 years old

Personal Statement

I lived with my father and stepmother at their Bed & Breakfast accommodation, along with my step siblings. My father was often away for work, and my stepmother frequently subjected me to physical abuse, occurring about 3 to 4 times daily. One of my brothers, one of my sisters, and the babysitter also sexually abused me. This situation escalated one day, and upon my return, my father informed me that I could no longer stay there and that I would have to be placed into care, as he no longer wanted me in the house. When I got taken away, what had happened was I had been out drinking with these guys, drinking beer and things like that and one of the guys stayed in the bed and breakfast. My dad didn't like this and so he actually chased me around the house with a knife because he was really angry that I had been away all day. My dad had also just found out about my stepmother and the way she was abusing me physically and that's when my dad took me to the social work department because he didn't want me to suffer anymore what I was going through. My dad said he didn't want me back at home so that afternoon I was taken to a care home.

The first place I went to was Calder Grove and this was supposed to be for six weeks and ended up being for 7 months. Calder Grove was okay, the staff were nice and settled me and everything. I had my own room upstairs.

South House Children's Home Edinburgh

After that, the social work department decided to move me to South House Children's Home in Edinburgh. I had meetings and then they decided that if everybody was happy then I would move on to South House as Calder Grove was only supposed to be a six-week thing, but I had been there much longer. My negative experiences primarily occurred at South House.

At South House I had my own room right opposite the bathroom. There was a male staff member named Alan Sinclair who behaved inappropriately towards me. He would take me from my bed at night and bring me to the office downstairs. He forced me to engage in sexual acts with him. I remember him so clearly, he was fat, he had a beard and his shirt buttons were always popping. He had a bunch of keys attached to his trousers. As the night shift manager, whenever I heard the key turning in my door, I knew what was about to happen. This occurred 2 to 3 times a week. I began to feel as though this was normal and questioned whether he did this with anyone else. I remember trying to cover my knees with my nightdress to prevent him from putting his hands underneath, but that never worked. He would say to me, "If you let me touch you the way I want, I'll ensure you receive your clothing allowance money this month." If I refused, he would inform the other staff that my behaviour warranted not receiving it, and I was blackmailed every month. He would always say to

me, remember if you tell anyone you won't get your clothing grant this month and my mum didn't really buy me any clothes when I was younger, so I really depended on that. I often planned in my mind where I could sleep safely among others so he couldn't reach me, but that never happened.

When I would take a bath at night, Alan would come in to "check if everything was okay," but it made me feel uncomfortable, and I was already aware of his intentions. There was no lock on the bathroom, and he used to pop his head through the door. The reason there was no lock on the bathroom door was because the children in the home used to go into the bathroom and lock themselves in if they were in trouble for anything. I would walk around the house wondering, "Is this normal?". I don't think that was happening to anybody else in there I just think it was happening to me because I had a friend in there called Patricia and she wouldn't have put up with that so honestly, I think it was just me. I used to get bullied by Patricia as well, this happened for ages until I stood up for myself. It went on for a good few months until I had enough and stood up for myself. Patricia battered me a few times. Patricia used to steal my money as well because I was on a YTS and she was on a YTS and we both used to get money every week around £15 per week or so. She would say to me you owe me this and you owe me that otherwise I am going to batter you so what could you do other than give it to her. I told my key worker May about this and said she keeps taking my money off me. I think it took me to stand up to her for it to stop happening but before that I took a healthy few batterings off her. She put fag ends out on my face and stuff like that. The other staff weren't abusive. I had two keyworkers in there called May and Donna. The other staff were brilliant they took us away to Butlins for a fortnight and things like that. It was just that horrible night worker. South House was an all-right children's home; the staff were brilliant it was just that one lassie and that horrible night shift manager. I was sworn to secrecy because otherwise I would have had no allowance and as I said I depended on that I had nothing else my mum didn't buy me anything. Also just looking back at the way I was back then I think I was probably just too scared to say anything. I never talked to anyone about this back then; it wasn't until I was about 17 that I discussed it with my social worker regarding my experiences in the home. It was the first time it had come out about my brother abusing me and the babysitter abusing me and that is when I mentioned about my treatment in the home as well.

Since leaving care, I have struggled with both mental and physical health issues, leaving me unable to work. I have suffered overdoses. I have a long history of suicide attempts and self-harm. I take anti-depression tablets and sleeping medication – I used these things to numb the pain. I have been taking medication for 21 years. My time in care ruined my relationship with other people as I don't trust people, especially men. I find it difficult to maintain relationships, although my 3 sons keep me going.

Date: 01/05/2026

Method: Taken over phone

Added via WhatsApp 03/05/2026 - in 1989 I was pregnant I still had contact with some of the staff from South House, but I did move to supported accommodation and was still under the social services. I was 17 years old and as I wasn't mature enough to make decisions for myself, a few of the staff pressured me into having a termination. I believe I would have been around 2-3 months pregnant. I listened to them as I wasn't sure what to do. We met up and they took me to the hospital that day. I refused to go but they said it was better for me to have the procedure. I sat in the park that morning not wanting to do it but somehow, I went through with it. I wasn't seeing the baby's father then, but he was also in the care system. I don't know if this will show up in my care notes, but I have lived with this my whole adulthood knowing that I was talked into it and I regret it. I do have three boys now who don't know about it. I have kept just kept this locked in my heart.

